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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Agenda item 7

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND STUDY OF SPECIAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING: PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO ENJOY AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING; FOREIGN DEBT, ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND, IN PARTICULAR, ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium*, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark*, France, Germany, Greece*, Guatemala*, Hungary, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar*, Mauritius, Mexico, Peru, Philippines*, Poland, Portugal*, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda*, Senegal*, Slovakia*, Spain*, Switzerland*, and Venezuela: draft resolution

Human rights and extreme poverty

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling that in the Charter of the United Nations the peoples of the United Nations have reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Mindful that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family,

Recalling that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights recognize that the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can be achieved only if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights,

Reaffirming that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the promotion and protection of one category of rights should never exempt or excuse States from the promotion and protection of other rights,

Recalling that the elimination of widespread poverty, including its most persistent forms, and the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights remain interrelated goals,

Deeply concerned by the fact that extreme poverty continues to spread throughout the countries of the world, regardless of their economic, social or cultural situation, and gravely affects the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and groups, who are thus hindered in the exercise of their human rights and their fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing, moreover, that respect for and promotion of all human rights are essential if all individuals are to participate freely and responsibly in the development of the society in which they live,

Welcoming the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, emphasizing that the existence of extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and that its immediate alleviation and eventual elimination must be accorded high priority by the international community, and reaffirming that extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent steps are necessary to achieve a better understanding of extreme poverty and its causes, including those related to the problems of development, in order to promote the human rights of the poorest, to put an end to extreme poverty and social exclusion and to promote the enjoyment of social progress,

Recalling its resolution 1990/15 of 23 February 1990, in which it requested the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to carry out a specific study of extreme poverty and social exclusion, its resolution 1991/14 of 22 February 1991, in which it recommended that the Sub-Commission should give attention more particularly to the conditions in which the poorest themselves can convey their experience and their thinking and so contribute to a better understanding of the harsh reality of their lives and its causes, and of its meaning for the international community, its resolution 1992/11 of 21 February 1992, and its resolution 1993/13 of 26 February 1993 approving the appointment of Mr. Leandro DESPOUY as Special Rapporteur on the question of human rights and extreme poverty.

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 47/134 of 18 December 1992, entitled "Human rights and extreme poverty", which reaffirms that extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity and emphasizes the need for complete and in-depth study of extreme poverty based on the experience and thoughts of the poorest,

Recalling decision 1991/6, entitled "Reaching the poorest", adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, in which it is emphasized that a more thorough knowledge of the situation of the poorest children and their families is needed, as well as decision 1993/8, entitled "UNICEF programmes for the urban poor", which underlines the importance and urgency of the problems that children living in urban areas meet with and the need to focus on innovative solutions recommended by the poorest themselves to cope with the situation,

Noting the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which acknowledges that there are in all countries of the world children living in especially difficult conditions and that special attention should be granted to those children,

Noting also General Assembly resolution 44/82 of 8 December 1989, in which the Assembly proclaimed 1994 the International Year of the Family,

Emphasizing furthermore the importance of the World Summit on Social Development, which will take place in Copenhagen in March 1995, for the discussion on poverty,

Mindful of the Secretary-General's reports on human rights and extreme poverty (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/38 and Add.1 and 2, and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/50),

Bearing in mind in this context the action already taken in the relevant forums to ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights,

1. Reaffirms that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. Also reaffirms that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in their communities, the promotion of human rights and efforts to combat extreme poverty;

3. Draws the attention of the General Assembly, specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations to the contradiction between the existence of situations of extreme poverty and exclusion from society, which must be overcome, and the duty to guarantee full enjoyment of human rights;

4. Encourages the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to pay more attention in its work to the question of extreme poverty and exclusion from society;

5. Welcomes the fact that the Committee on the Rights of the Child, at its fourth session, gave attention to the situation of children living in extreme poverty and their families during its discussions on the economic exploitation of children and in its message on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Poverty;

6. Encourages the Committee on the Rights of the Child to continue to take into account, in its discussions and work, the situation of children living in extreme poverty, with a view to promoting the enjoyment by all children of all rights recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

7. Recalls that, to ensure the protection of the rights of all individuals, non-discrimination as regards the poorest and the full exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, a better understanding is

needed of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, a better understanding is needed of what peoples living in extreme poverty, including the very large number of women and children in this situation, endure and thought must be given to the subject, drawing on the experiences and ideas of the poorest themselves and of those committed to working alongside them;

8. Endorses Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities resolution 1993/35 of 25 August 1993, taking note of the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/16);

9. Approves the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur relating to the organization of a seminar on extreme poverty and denial of human rights, which will be held around 17 October 1994;

10. Invites the Special Rapporteur to continue to give special attention to the following aspects in preparing his reports:

(a) The effects of extreme poverty on the enjoyment and exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of those affected by it;

(b) Efforts by the poorest themselves to exercise their rights and participate fully in the development of the society in which they live;

(c) Conditions in which the poorest can convey their experiences and ideas and become partners in the enjoyment of human rights;

(d) Means of promoting a better understanding of the experiences and ideas of the poorest and those committed to working alongside them;

11. Also invites the Special Rapporteur to give attention within the framework of his mandate to the interrelationship between the family, combating extreme poverty, and observance of the human rights of the poorest;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Special Rapporteur with all necessary assistance for the fulfilment of his mandate, particularly his consultations with United Nations bodies, Governments, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including as appropriate, assistance from those with experience of the subject;

13. Welcomes the events organized by the United Nations to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Poverty on 17 October, which, in conformity with the wishes expressed by the Commission on Human Rights in its

resolution 1993/13, focused on the poorest and gave due attention to events already organized worldwide since 17 October 1987 on the theme "Rejection of extreme poverty";

14. Invites States, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to give due attention, in celebrating the International Day for the Elimination of Poverty, to the relationship between extreme poverty and human rights and to the situation of the poorest, who must be the focus of events;

15. Decides to examine this question at its fifty-first session under agenda item 7.